

English

Comprehension



For Middle Primary

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- Read or listen to the story below. It is written in the **STYLE** of a Dreaming creation story. After reading or listening to the story complete the activity sheets which follow.

How Numbats Became Diurnal

(by Lindsay Marsh)

A long time ago, before people lived on Earth, Numbat and Bat were both nocturnal. They lived together peacefully and spent the dark cool nights searching for termites.

One night, when the animals woke to begin their nightly search for food, Numbat could not find a single termite. Now it was a fact that Numbat was slower than Bat and his claws were not as sharp, but it was also a fact that to survive he needed to eat many termites during one night.

Night after night, Numbat awoke to a termite-free world, and as time passed, he grew thinner and weaker, while Bat grew fatter and heavier.

Weak with hunger and desperate for help, Numbat finally decided to visit Bat in his cave. When he entered Bat's cave, Numbat was shocked to see a very round Bat chomping through a delicious pile of termites.



"Bat!" cried Numbat. "You have so many termites. Look at me, I have grown thin and weak and I fear that I will die. Will you please spare me some of your termites so that I can live to see another day?"

Frugally, Bat handed over the tiniest termite from the pile, and lied, "It is all I can spare. You see, Numbat, I may look fat, but I am empty inside. I have swollen with hunger."

At this moment, the almighty Rainbow Serpent appeared. Bat shook with fear as the powerful Rainbow Serpent slithered further into his cave. "Bat," bellowed the colourful Serpent. "You have been mean-spirited. As a punishment, from this day on, Numbat will rise in the morning when the termites rise, before you have even woken. He will never have to struggle to find termites again. You, however, may be forced to eat things not quite to your fancy."

And this is why numbats hunt for their food in the day and are not nocturnal.



Dreaming creation stories are stories which were created by Indigenous Elders and passed on orally to younger generations. They are designed to be listened to rather than read.

Below is a list of typical features found in a Dreaming creation story. After reading the story *How Numbats Became Diurnal* on the previous page, place ticks next to the features which can be found in the story.



1. Dreaming creation stories explain how the Earth was created and explain features of animals and animal behaviours. ☐
2. Dreaming creation stories teach listeners about their culture's relationship with animals. ☐
3. Dreaming creation stories are typically set a long time ago (at the time of Creation) and in the Australian Outback. ☐
4. Dreaming creation stories typically end with words such as, "And this is why..." or "To this day..." ☐
5. Dreaming creation stories typically include a problem/ complication caused by the bad behaviour of an animal or a human. ☐
6. Dreaming creation stories usually include a resolution which solves the problem/ complication introduced in the story. ☐
7. Dreaming creation stories are often anthropomorphic - this means that the animals talk and have human feelings. ☐
8. The title of a Dreaming creation story often tells the reader/ listener what feature of creation it is going to explain, e.g. *How The Numbat Got Its Stripes; How The Moon Was Made; How The Kangaroo Got Its Pouch* and *Where The Stars Came From*. ☐
9. Dreaming creation stories often contain a moral which is used to pass on expectations of behaviour, general beliefs and laws of the land. ☐
10. Dreaming creation stories often include a hero and a villain. ☐
11. Dreaming creation stories are usually written in the past tense because they explain a past event. ☐



- Read or listen to the story *How Numbats Became Diurnal*, then complete this activity sheet.

Dreaming creation stories introduce a problem. This problem is usually solved at the end of the text. Fill out the Problem Chart below to explore in more detail the problem and resolution in *How Numbats Became Diurnal*.

Problem Chart

1

What is a problem in the text?

2

What caused the problem?

3

What was the effect of the problem?

4

How was this problem resolved?

Preview



How Is The Story Organised?

Activity

- Read or listen to the story *How Numbats Became Diurnal*, then complete this activity sheet.

Place ticks in the boxes to indicate if the parts of the story belong to the orientation, complication or resolution.

	Orientation	Complication	Resolution
Numbat was weak with hunger and desperate for help.			
A long time ago, before people lived on Earth.			
From this day on, Numbat will rise in the morning when the termites rise.			
Numbat awoke to a termite-free world.			
Numbat and Bat lived together peacefully.			
The almighty Rainbow Serpent appeared.			
Numbat could not find a single termite.			
"You, however, may be forced to eat things not quite to your fancy."			
And this is why you only ever see numbats hunting for food in the day.			
They spent the dark cool nights searching for termites.			

true or false?

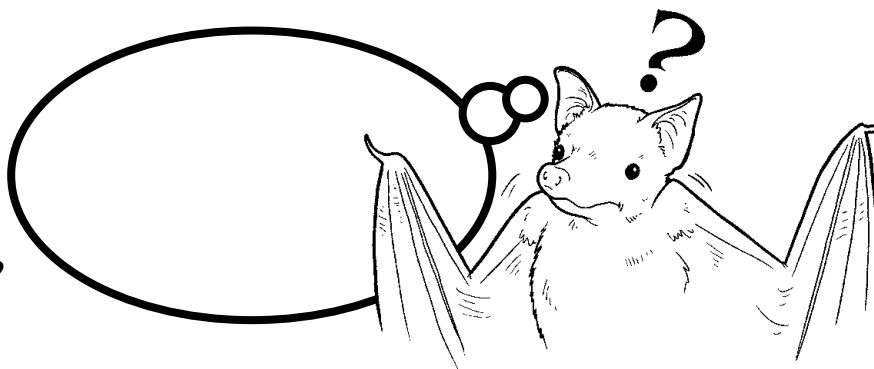
Please tick.

- Another word for a problem is a conflict. ☐ true ☐ false
- Another word for a resolution is a solution. ☐ true ☐ false
- Resolutions are happy endings. ☐ true ☐ false



- Read or listen to the story *How Numbats Became Diurnal*, then complete this activity sheet.

1. In the story *How Numbats Became Diurnal* Bat has a decision to make. What is this decision?



2. In the story, Bat could do what is moral (right) or choose to be immoral (do the wrong thing). Bat chooses not to be moral. Why?

3. Because of Bat's immoral behaviour he is punished. How?

Think of Another Story

Bat's punishment shows that those who are moral are often rewarded, and those who are immoral are often punished. Think about another text which you have read, listened to, or seen, which includes a character who has to make a moral decision. Write about it here.

Title of text:

Character who has to make a moral decision:

What is this decision?

What does he/she choose to do?

Is this decision moral or immoral?

Is the character punished or rewarded?

How?



- Read or listen to the story *How Numbats Became Diurnal*, then complete this activity sheet.

Texts can remind us of other texts that we have read, listened to or seen. They can also remind us of experiences that we have had in our own lives.

Complete the connection stems to help you to make connections between the story *How Numbats Became Diurnal* and your own life and other texts.

This story reminds me of another story I know ...

I have had an experience like the one in the story ...

I have a connection to this Creation Dreaming story because...

Preview



- Read or listen to the story *How Numbats Became Diurnal*, then complete this activity sheet.

Complete the Cause and Effect charts by selecting two important events from the story.

Event 1: _____

Cause

Why did this event happen?

Effect

What was the result of this event happening?

Event 2: _____

Cause

Why did this event happen?

Effect

What was the result of this event happening?



- Read or listen to the story *How Numbats Became Diurnal*, then complete this activity sheet.

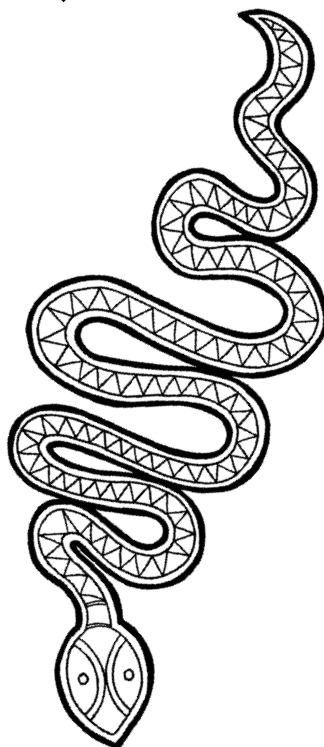
A. Write five words/phrases that are used in the story to describe Bat.

fatter



B. Write three words/phrases that are used in the story to describe the Rainbow Serpent. Add two of your own.

almighty



Answers

Page 4

Students should tick: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11.

Page 5

1. The problem in the text is that Numbat cannot find any termites to eat, which has left him fighting for his life.
2. Bat has caused this problem because he has taken more than his fair share of termites. His greediness has left Numbat starving.
3. Numbat becomes so desperate that he asks Bat to help him.
4. The almighty Rainbow Serpent solves this problem by punishing Bat and rewarding Numbat. The Serpent makes Numbat diurnal instead of nocturnal, which means that from now on Numbat will get to the termites before Bat when he rises in the morning.

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	Orientation	Complication	Resolution
Numbat was weak with hunger and desperate for help.		✓	
A long time ago, before people lived on Earth.	✓		
From this day on, Numbat will rise in the morning when the termites rise.			✓
Numbat awoke to a termite-free world.		✓	
Numbat and Bat lived together peacefully.	✓		
The almighty Rainbow Serpent appeared.			✓
Numbat could not find a single termite.		✓	
"You, however, may be forced to eat things not quite to your fancy."			✓
And this is why you only ever see numbats hunting for food in the day.			✓
They spent the dark cool nights searching for termites.			

True or False?

1. True
2. True
3. False (resolutions can mean unhappy endings also)

Page 7

1. Bat has to decide whether to share his termites with Numbat.
2. Because Bat chooses to keep the termites to himself thus showing that he is greedy, unkind and selfish.
3. Bat is punished by the Rainbow Serpent. The Rainbow Serpent makes Numbat diurnal but Bat must remain nocturnal. This means that Numbat will get to the termites before Bat, and there may not be many termites left for Bat when he wakes. He might be forced to eat other food that is not to his liking.

Page 10

- A. *nocturnal; heavier; round; chomping; frugally; lied; mean-spirited*
 B. *powerful; slithered; colourful*